

## Psalm 132

*"I am the root and the offspring of David..."*

### 1. Background

Psalm 132 is by far the longest of the Songs of Ascent.

A "stand out" feature of the Psalm is the frequency with which it uses the name of David – four times in all. The only other Psalm that uses the name David that many times is Psalm 89, and it is much longer! So Psalm 132 is as "Davidic" a Psalm as you could hope to encounter.

"David" is the most common personal name in the Bible ("Israel" occurs twice as often, but as the name of the nation, not the patriarch). So the story of the OT is the story of the LORD and David, their mutual commitment to the task of providing for Israel's security and peace. That's the background to Psalm 132.

In fact, it's perhaps not going too far to say that this Psalm relates to us the *raison d'être* of David's life. The "afflictions" which the opening line asks God to remember weren't just incidental to David's life – his public ministry was affliction from beginning to end, and all of it directed to end of preparing for the construction of the temple in Jerusalem as the resting place of the ark of the covenant. David was not exaggerating when he said in Psalm 69:9, "Zeal for your house has consumed me."

In particular, Psalm 132 reworks 2 Samuel 6-7 and the desire of David to bring the ark of the covenant up to Jerusalem and there to provide a "house" for God – and God's covenant promise to David that he (God) would build David a "house" (a royal dynasty) which would last for ever.

But David is the prototype of "great David's greater son". It's a fascinating fact that almost the last thing Jesus says in the NT is "I am the root and offspring of David" (Revelation 22:16). Remember also what we learned from Matthew's Gospel, how often Matthew keys Jesus' life into David. He begins at the very beginning ("The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham", Matt. 1:1) – and works it out right through to the end ("All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me", Matt. 28:18).

### 2. Structure

The structure of the Psalm is illustrated overleaf. It comprises two panels which match each other remarkably, and a conclusion which answers to the prayers with which the two panels open. In particular:

- Both panels open with an appeal "for David's sake" (vv. 1, 10);
- Both panel reflect on the pivotal passage of 2 Samuel 7, i.e. David's desire to build God a house (vv. 2-5, cf. 2 Samuel 7:2) and God's response that he would build David a house (vv. 11-12, cf. 2 Samuel 7:5-16).

- Panel 1 speaks about the last resting place of the ark outside Zion and expresses the desire that it should "rise up!" for its final journey (vv. 6-9), while Panel 2 speaks about God's delight in Zion as his final resting place (vv. 13-16).
- The opening prayers (vv. 1, 10) are answered by the concluding promise (vv. 17-18), i.e. the anointed will not be turned away (v. 10) but will abide in God's house (v. 17), and David's afflictions (conflict with his enemies, v. 1) will give way to royal splendour (v. 18).

### 3. Notes

#### (a) David's oath to the LORD (vv. 1-9)

Compare David's oath (vv. 3-5) with Psalm 127. David was determined to build God a house. But God said, "No, you are not the man to build me a house."

"Ephrathah" (v. 6) is another name for Bethlehem, but may also be another name for Kiriath-jearim, the town where the ark remained after the Philistines destroyed Shiloh (1 Samuel 6:21-7:2). Kiriath-jearim means "the town of the woods" – the "fields of Jaar" are "the region of the wood".

The ark was regarded as the footstool (v. 7) of God's throne.

Compare v. 8 with Numbers 10:35-36. This cry marked the beginning of the journey of the ark from the foot of Sinai. Psalm 132 reports the end of the journey.

#### (b) The LORD's oath to David (vv. 10-16)

For God's oath see 2 Samuel 7:5-16. This is the LORD's covenant with David and is one of the most important passages in the OT, comparable to God's covenant promise to Abram (Genesis 15) and the giving of the covenant law in Exodus 20.

God's desire for Zion is a theme of the OT. See, for example, Psalm 87. The coming of the ark to Jerusalem was "journey's end". Moses had spoken about this in the Song of Salvation (Exodus 15:13,17).

God's throne and David's throne are established in the same city (vv. 12-13). The consequent peace (cf. Psalm 122) is described in vv. 15-16.

#### (c) The prayer of verses 1 and 10 is answered (vv. 17-18)

Verses 17 and 18 answer the prayer of vv. 1 and 10. The anointed one (Messiah) is not turned away by God (v. 10) – rather, he has a lamp (presence) in the house of God (v. 17). David's afflictions are not forgotten (v. 1) – rather, his enemies (those responsible for his affliction) are brought down, while he is exalted (v. 18).

It is noteworthy that the promise of a sprouting horn, and a lamp, and a crown, and anointed ones are repeated in Zechariah 4:1-14; 6:9-15 – all in the context of the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem, and the union of priest and king (temple throne and royal throne).

**Panel 1: *David's oath to the LORD***

<sup>1</sup> LORD, remember concerning David,  
all his afflictions;

<sup>2</sup> who swore to the LORD,  
he vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob,  
<sup>3</sup> "Surely I will not enter the tent of my house,  
surely I will not go up onto the couch of my bed,  
<sup>4</sup> surely I will give no sleep to my eyes,  
no slumber to my eyelids,  
<sup>5</sup> until I find a place for the LORD,  
dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob."

<sup>6</sup> Behold, we heard it in Ephrathah;  
we found it in the fields of the wood.  
<sup>7</sup> "Let us go to his dwelling place;  
let us worship at the footstool of his feet.  
<sup>8</sup> Rise up, O LORD, to your resting place,  
you and the ark of your strength.  
<sup>9</sup> Let your priests be clothed with righteousness,  
and let your loyal ones sing joyfully."

**Panel 2: *The LORD's oath to David***

<sup>10</sup> For the sake of David your servant,  
do not turn away the face of your Messiah.

<sup>11</sup> The LORD has sworn truly to David;  
he will not turn from it;  
"From the fruit of your belly,  
I will set one upon your throne.  
<sup>12</sup> If your sons will keep my covenant,  
and my testimony which I will teach them,  
then indeed your sons for ever and ever  
will sit upon your throne."

<sup>13</sup> For the LORD has chosen Zion;  
he has desired it as his seat.  
<sup>14</sup> "This is my resting place for ever an ever;  
here I will sit, for I have desired it.  
<sup>15</sup> I will richly bless her provision;  
her needy ones I will satisfy with bread;  
<sup>16</sup> and her priests I will clothe with salvation;  
and her loyal ones will sing most joyfully."

***The Prayer of vv. 1,10 will be answered***

<sup>17</sup> "There I will cause a horn to sprout for David;  
I will arrange a lamp for my Messiah.  
<sup>18</sup> His enemies I will clothe with shame;  
but upon him his crown will shine."